



BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE  
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# OUTLOOK: ANNUAL APPEAL 2020

## In This Issue

2

Exceptional Project  
Grant Awardee  
Alex Toker, MD

3

Young Investigator  
Grant Awardee  
Shom Goel, PhD

4

Models of Inspiration

5

Message from  
BCA President,  
Meg Russell

6

How you can help  
BCA save lives

7

Dr. Jonathan K. Smith  
2019 Rodkin  
Breast Surgery Fellow

8

2020 Grant Awards

VOLUME 27

## SPECIAL END OF YEAR MESSAGE

### YONNI WATTENMAKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What a year 2020 has been. In March we marked the end of our last fiscal year with our most successful year of grant making in BCA's history. The COVID-19

pandemic was already nipping at our heels, forcing us to not only "reimagine" events like our Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show, but most importantly, life as we knew it. The one thing we did not need to reimagine was our commitment to raising awareness, and improving statistics, for breast cancer.

**This one-time gift you make today will change what BCA funds in the tomorrow that is 2021.**

#### What has changed this year in breast

**cancer?** Access to healthcare is more difficult than ever, treatment and research have stalled, and diagnostic screenings and surgeries have been delayed, putting those most vulnerable at even higher risk. COVID-19 has also added a heightened layer of fear and anxiety at a time when women and men with breast cancer are already rife with those emotions.

**There has never been a more important time to help than now.**

Especially in these difficult times, our annual appeal is critical. Whether or not you have attended an event or made a previous contribution, this one-time gift you make today will change what BCA funds in the tomorrow that is 2021.

Without your help, and your financial support, advances will stall even further, new treatments and cures will take longer to find, and treating patients will be even more challenging. Yes, we must continue to spread awareness of, and education about, breast cancer risk, early detection and new treatments but we also must continue to raise funding for the life-saving and life-changing grants Breast Cancer Alliance makes possible.

We hope the information enclosed is a helpful guide as you consider how to best support BCA with an impactful year-end gift. There has never been a more important time to help than now.

With wishes for a better and healthy new year,

*Yonni Wattenmaker*

Yonni

# ALEX TOKER MD, 2019 DEBORAH G. BLACK MEMORIAL EXCEPTIONAL PROJECT GRANTEE, BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS

## “PRECISION MEDICINE APPROACHES TO TARGET ONCOGENIC FUSIONS IN TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER”



The focus of the research in our laboratory is two-fold. First, we use discovery-based approaches using cells derived from breast-cancer patients as well as mouse models of breast cancer to decipher the basic mechanisms of disease progression. Using the latest technologies including genomics, proteomics and metabolomics, our goal is to discover the cellular and molecular basis of breast cancer initiation and progression.

Second, we have a major focus on determining the causes of resistance to chemotherapies that are used as standard of care in breast cancer patients, with the goal of developing novel combination therapies that circumvent drug resistance to provide more durable therapeutic regimens for the treatment of patients. We have recently uncovered a number of ‘vulnerabilities’ in breast cancers, the equivalent of an Achilles heel, that have allowed us to develop new combination drug treatments that have shown promise in experimental mouse models of breast cancer.

**Funding from Breast Cancer Alliance has played an integral role in propelling our translational work to the next level.**

In 2019, approximately 41,760 women and 500 men died of breast cancer in the US. 70% of breast cancer patients express proteins on the surface of tumor cells, known as receptors for the female hormones estrogen and progesterone, the estrogen receptor (ER) and progesterone receptor (PR). A separate breast cancer cell surface protein is known as ‘human epidermal growth factor receptor 2’ (HER2). All of these receptors are important for tumor growth. This is why targeting and blocking these protein receptors using hormone therapies such as Tamoxifen targeting ER/PR, or monoclonal antibodies such as

Herceptin that block HER2 have had great impact on the survival of ER/PR-positive or HER2-positive patients. Unfortunately, for about 15% of breast cancer patients who are diagnosed with ‘triple negative breast cancer’ (TNBC), meaning that tumor cells do not express or express very low levels of ER, PR and Her2, there is no targeted therapy. TNBC also represents the most aggressive form of breast cancer, and the standard of care for these patients is treatment with drugs that damage DNA. While approximately 30% of triple negative breast cancer patients respond to initial chemotherapy, many patients relapse after therapy and for these patients, treatment options are very limited. Coupled with the toxic side effects of chemotherapy, there is a dire need for the development of novel targeted therapies for this type of breast cancer.

Each day, our team of dedicated scientists work avidly with our physician scientists and clinicians to continually improve the lives of cancer patients. This is only possible with funding that directly supports our work. As our research moves from basic discovery in the laboratory towards preclinical and clinical applications, it is more challenging to obtain research funds that traditionally are not supported for such translational applications. Funding from Breast Cancer Alliance has played an integral role in propelling our translational work to the next level. In our BCA-funded project, we have focused our studies on a family of receptors known as fibroblast growth factor receptors (FGFRs) that have been recently found to be of particular importance in TNBC patients.

When expressed or mutated, or fused to other genes to generate chimera proteins, FGFRs have the ability to promote tumor growth in TNBC. In our studies, we are identifying biomarkers for potential FGFR inhibitor responders to look for ways that tumor cells become resistant to drugs. We are also combining FGFR with immunotherapy to evaluate the efficacy of these novel combinations.

Ultimately, funding from BCA has greatly facilitated the first phase of this project which we will hope will ultimately lead to identifying potential responders to FGFR inhibitors. In addition to uncovering new mechanisms that drive breast cancer, this work will also have direct impact in informing ongoing clinical trials, as eventually initiate new clinical trials based on the results from our pre-clinical models.

### BCA FACTS



**122** Exceptional Project Research (since 1997)



## SHOM GOEL, PhD, 2018 YOUNG INVESTIGATOR RESEARCH GRANTEE

PETER MACCALLUM CANCER CENTRE, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA  
FORMERLY OF DANA FARBER CANCER CENTER, BOSTON, MA



I am a breast cancer physician-scientist working at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Melbourne, Australia. At the “Peter Mac”, I have a clinical practice for patients with breast cancer and also run a research lab. My team’s research is focused on understanding how breast cancer cells divide, and on how drugs that block cell division can be used to treat breast cancer.

My research career began in Boston in 2012, when I took up a position at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute under the mentorship of Dr Eric Winer. During my time at the Dana-Farber, I focused my efforts on lab research and specifically on a class of drugs called the CDK4/6 inhibitors. These drugs have revolutionised the way we treat many patients with metastatic breast cancer, and our research has uncovered several unexpected mechanisms which led to the development of a large number of international clinical trials.

BCA is a tremendous organisation that has supported a number of outstanding research projects, and I am delighted to be a part of the BCA family.

In 2018, I was awarded a two-year Young Investigator Grant from Breast Cancer Alliance to support my work on CDK4/6 inhibitors. At this time, my independent research career was just beginning and our team was embarking upon a number

of very exciting projects. BCA funds were instrumental in supporting our research, and allowed us to accelerate our progress by funding a number of costly, but critical, lab experiments. In 2019, I was offered my current position in Australia, and decided to accept it for personal reasons (I am originally from Australia).

It was a very difficult decision to leave Boston, but one that was made a little easier when BCA generously agreed to me carrying out the second year of my grant term in Melbourne.

Since arriving here, our team has continued along the same line of research we were pursuing in Boston, and have recently completed

a major project which was published in the prestigious journal *Nature Cancer*. This project, supported by BCA, has uncovered an entirely new way by which CDK4/6 inhibitors work, altering which genes are switched on or off in cancer cells (a phenomenon called “epigenetic remodelling”). Our findings have major implications for the way these drugs are used, and also suggest a number of new drug combinations that could be used to make CDK4/6 inhibitors work

better. We are very proud of this work and believe it is likely to lead to new clinical trials which have the potential to improve outcomes for breast cancer patients. I am very grateful to BCA not only for their support, but also for their flexibility and vision. BCA is a tremendous organisation that has supported a number of outstanding research projects, and I am delighted to be a part of the BCA family.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the support of our research!

### BCA FACTS



**61** Young Investigator Research (since 2002)

## WORDS OF INSPIRATION FROM OUR MODELS OF INSPIRATION



Photo Credit: Fairfield County LOOK

Top Row L-R: Anna Forde, Maria Hryckowian, Nicole DiMonda-Brambila, Kathleen Lozier, Amy Frolick, Robyn Jones  
Bottom Row L-R: Shealyn Kirts, Annmarie Veziano Formato, Reshma Gopaldas, Melissa Tolchin, Vivien Monique Evans, Jennifer Dreilinger

As patients confront diagnoses, each one turns to different sources of support. Our twelve Models of Inspiration from this year's Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show shared their mantras for strength during their course of treatment in our event journal. We found them so meaningful that we decided to share them with you again here.

"I am so thirsty for the marvelous that only the marvelous has power over me. Anything I cannot transform into something marvelous, I let go. Reality doesn't impress me. I only believe in intoxication, ecstasy, and when ordinary life shackles me, I escape one way or another."— Anais Nin  
- Nicole DiMonda-Brambila

"Life is so fragile and all it takes is a single moment to change everything you take for granted. Focus on what's important and be grateful! You are blessed! Believe it! Live your life and leave no regrets."  
- Jennifer Dreilinger

"Never underestimate your ability to FIGHT! I fought and won. So can you!"  
- Vivian Monique Evans

"Never give up. Never give in."  
- Annmarie Veziano Formato

"Surviving cancer is not the end of a gruesome story. It's the beginning of a beautiful one."  
- Anna Forde

"Accept. Adjust. Appreciate."  
- Amy Frolick

"Underestimate me. That'll be fun."  
- Reshma Gopaldas

"Focus your energy on only the things you can control."  
- Maria Hryckowian

"It is not what we have in life, but who we have in our life that matters."  
- Robyn Jones

"Tell the story of the mountain you climbed. Your words could become a page in someone else's survival guide"  
- Shealyn Kirts

"When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on." — Franklin D. Roosevelt  
- Kathleen Lozier

"There are two types of people: the ones who give you 50 reasons it can't be done... and the ones who just do it"  
- Melissa Tolchin

# MESSAGE FROM MEG RUSSELL, BCA PRESIDENT



I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. It has certainly been an interesting year. COVID forced us to rethink how we work while not being able to gather, be it for meetings or for one of our many fundraising events, and I am proud to say we have risen to the

**Due to COVID-19, the number of underserved just continues to rise. We must continue to support these essential programs and we need your help to make that possible.**

challenge. Our virtual Get Fit For Hope Challenge in May (previously planned as our 5K Run/ Walk for Hope) raised over \$110,000 for Education and Outreach grantees who confronted new challenges presented by COVID, whether it was loss of employment or health insurance, diminished wages or being diagnosed with the disease itself. We added a few new events, which were well received and introduced BCA to new supporters. Thankfully, the reduced cost in holding virtual events has helped keep our expenses as low as possible helping to maximize donations. We have held our Breast Surgery Fellowship and Education and Outreach site visits virtually, and are in the midst of enjoying some with our research grantees now as well.

It is a silver lining of these challenging times to allow for greater participation in these meaningful events safely from our own homes. Most recently, our Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show in October exceeded all expectations but more importantly, was just as meaningful as

if we were all together as in years' past. However, even with those great successes, we are still struggling to raise the kind of income we raised last year because of the pandemic, and we

need that revenue to fund the important research projects and fellowships breast cancer patients so desperately need. For example, both our Young Investigator Grants and our Exceptional Project Grants

**We are only one of a small number of supporters of that critical early-stage research and breast surgery fellowships, so critical gains cannot be achieved without BCA support.**

recognize creative, unique and innovative research and provide that critical bridge between novel research hypotheses and the opportunity to generate preliminary results needed to secure federal funding. We fund Breast Surgery Fellowships to ensure that physicians in communities across the US have the most cutting-edge training and skills to benefit all of their patients, regardless of socio-economic status. We are only one of a small number of supporters of that critical early-stage

**211**  
**Education and Outreach**

(since 1997)



**BCA FACTS**

research and breast surgery fellowships, so critical gains cannot be achieved without BCA support. Lastly, our Education and Outreach grants support programs directly related to outreach and breast cancer case management services, including education, counseling and screening for the uninsured and underserved. Due to COVID-19, the number of underserved just continues to rise. We must continue to support these essential programs and

we need your help to make that possible.

Enclosed you will find ways to give which you may not have previously considered, such as a tax-beneficial gift of stock or through a

planned gift. We are happy to discuss these options with you to see what works best for you and your family.

With gratitude,

Meg Russell

# HOW YOU CAN HELP BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE

## SAVE LIVES TODAY

There are many ways to make your end-of-year gift to Breast Cancer Alliance. Below are a variety of options from which you can choose. A remittance envelope with these options is enclosed for your convenience as well.

### Make a traditional cash donation

Thanks to the passage of the CARES Act and key changes for the 2020 tax filing year, every American can donate up to \$300 tax-free, whether or not you itemize deductions. Even with the success of our events during this pandemic, our grant giving for 2021 may still be severely impacted. Your gift will make an important difference as we look to our next funding cycle for research and breast surgery fellows.

### Donor Advised Funds

Through a donor-advised fund, you simplify and maximize your charitable giving. By making a tax-efficient gift to Breast Cancer Alliance, you can simplify your giving plan. Through your donor-advised fund, you can recommend grants at any time and your donations are eligible for the same tax deduction that you might receive by donating cash to any qualified charity.

### Qualified Retirement Assets

A gift of qualified retirement assets – like IRA, 401(k) and 403(b) accounts – may be worth significantly more if you donate them than if you passed them to a beneficiary (other than a spouse). For individuals with IRA accounts, there are no Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) this year. However, giving pre-tax funds out of your IRA will still lower your future tax burden compared to giving cash. This is a growing and powerful option.

### Some of the benefits

As a non-profit organization, there is no federal income or estate tax on the donated balance of your retirement assets, so the full value is available for charitable purposes. In contrast, retirement accounts received by your heirs are subject to income tax on the entire balance of the account. During your lifetime, you continue to use and receive distributions from your retirement accounts. If your circumstances change, you can easily change the beneficiary designations.

### Life Insurance

Life insurance is designed to protect your loved ones. BCA receives the promise of an eventual, or perhaps immediate, gift while you may receive income and estate tax benefits. You have a few options: donate a paid-up policy and deduct the approximate cash-surrender value; purchase a new policy and deduct the premiums paid when BCA is the named the owner; donate a policy where you continue to pay premiums and deduct the approximate cash value and future premiums; or name BCA as the beneficiary (primary, secondary or contingent) keeping this asset out of the taxable estate.

### Charitable Bequests and The Three Girls Legacy Society

This is the gift of a lifetime. It is how the Deborah G. Black Memorial Scientific Research Fund was created. Debbie loved BCA and knew the impact of its research grants on the breast cancer landscape, so she left a transformative bequest to be gifted upon her death. By adding BCA as a beneficiary in your will, as Debbie and others have, you become a member of the Three Girls Legacy Society, providing support for BCA for years to come without paying anything today. It is a profound way to leave a legacy.

*If you have questions about how to make a pledge to the Three Girls Legacy Society or to make a non-cash contribution before year end, please email Yonni Wattenmaker at [yonni@breastcanceralliance.org](mailto:yonni@breastcanceralliance.org).*

### Transfer of Stock

See combined tax savings of up to 70% of your gift when you donate appreciated stocks of mutual funds. Donating appreciated assets allows you to avoid state and federal capital gains and you can take state and federal income tax deductions for the current market value of this gift. This is increasingly becoming the favored way for donors to make a meaningful annual gift.

## BENEFITS AND FAQs ABOUT GIFTING STOCK

If you are seeking a tax-savvy way to help Breast Cancer Alliance maximize its grant-making capacity for 2021, you can make a larger impact than you ever thought possible with a gift of stock AND your gift is mutually beneficial – we receive the full value of the stock, while you avoid paying capital gains tax. Here are a few common questions and answers about why this is a great way to make a year-end gift.

### What are the tax benefits of donating appreciated assets?

By donating stock rather than selling it, you will avoid paying a capital gains tax. Capital gains tax is a tax on the profit made from the sale of a non-inventory asset like stock. These can be as high as a federal tax rate of 20% for long-term holdings (or stocks being held for more than one year), and for some states (like California, which has a 13% tax rate) an additional tax rate on top of the federal rate. If you donate a long-term holding and itemize deductions, you can also take a charitable deduction for the entire donation.

### Can I have an example of how transferring stocks can save me money?

When you donate stocks, you are essentially saving 30% on taxes by excluding gains from your returns. Let's say you want to give a gift of \$1,000 to our organization this year. If you want to sell the stock before donating it, you would have to sell about \$1,400, and pay the \$400 in taxes on the sale of the stock before donating the remaining \$1,000. But if you transfer the stock directly to our organization, you only need to transfer the \$1,000 worth of stocks, and you won't have to pay the tax. The stock market is trending upwards, but it has been a tumultuous year.



## DR. JONATHAN K. SMITH, 2019 RODKIN BREAST SURGERY FELLOW, RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE OF NEW JERSEY



Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to update you on how my fellowship training is impacting where I am now, and how much BCA funding for fellowships matters.

I finished my Breast Surgical Oncology fellowship four months ago. Prior to fellowship, I'd been in General Surgery practice for 17 years, where breast surgery had been a substantial part of my practice. Since completing my fellowship, I've begun working for OSF Healthcare in Peoria, Illinois. I am the only breast surgical oncology-trained specialist in the region. Here, I've been able to focus solely on breast surgical oncology. It is so important to have undivided interests in such a rapidly evolving field, especially when viewing this through the lens

of a formal general surgeon.

This affords me to practice the most current, evidence-based medicine in breast oncology in Central Illinois. In particular, since joining

this community, I have noted

a number of outdated practice patterns which will need to change, particularly overutilization of MRI and poor breast conservation rates. My fellowship training has definitely provided the tools I need to change these patterns, and provide better outcomes for our patients.

I cannot stress enough the importance of Breast Cancer Alliance's funding breast surgical oncology fellowships. In my fellowship program, the means for supporting the fellow didn't exist without BCA's funding. Without graduating fellows, there would be no expert level of care for breast cancer patients in the community. I am honored and humbled to have been able to complete my fellowship, and to be able to provide the most up to date, evidence-based medicine to our breast cancer patients here in Central Illinois. Without BCA's assistance, I wouldn't be able to provide be able to provide my patients with the best care possible.

### Is it still a good time to donate stocks?

Yes, and now might be the best time to donate stocks. The stock market has been trending upwards, reaching highs in August 2020. But the market is volatile, and trends can change at any moment. Donating stocks today ensures you can take advantage of these highs and give the powerful gift you intend. After donating stock, you are eligible to buy the same stock again within the day. This allows you to make a powerful, tax-savvy gift while maintaining your portfolio, no matter the market.

### For my gift to be eligible for my 2020 tax return, when should I give?

We recommend following the market to ensure that you can give the best gift based on the assets you hold. However, for your gift to be eligible for the 2020 tax year, please transfer your stocks by December 31, 2020.

### What information should I give my broker to make this gift to BCA?

JPMorgan Chase Bank  
DTC Participant Number 902  
For Account Number - P72500  
FFC For Account Number -  
PBD#Q24093009  
For Account of - GREENWICH BCA INC

My fellowship training has definitely provided the tools I need to change these patterns, and provide better outcomes for our patients.

## BCA FACTS

**45** Breast Surgery  
Fellows  
(since 2006)



## **BREAST CANCER ALLIANCE** is one of the most prominent private non-corporate breast cancer organizations in the United States.

The mission of Breast Cancer Alliance is to improve survival rates and quality of life for those impacted by breast cancer through better prevention, early detection, treatment and cure. To promote these goals, we invest in innovative research, breast surgery fellowships, regional education, dignified support and screening for the underserved.

### **THESE ARE THE GRANTS BCA AWARDED IN 2020:**

#### **EXCEPTIONAL PROJECT RESEARCH GRANTS**

**Mary L. Disis, MD**

*University of Washington, Seattle*

Vaccination Targeting Breast Cancer Stem Cells  
*Supported by Susan Bevan and Tony Daddino*

**Hani Goodarzi, PhD**

*University of California, San Francisco*

Leveraging circulating cancer-specific orphan RNAs for screening of women with BRCA 1 and 2 mutations  
*The Walsh Family Grant*

**Poulikos Poulikakos, PhD**

*Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

Targeting SHP2 as a converging node of targeted and immune therapy in TNBC

**Jose Silva, PhD**

*Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

Alterations in microtubule dynamics: the Yin and Yang of chemoresistance in triple negative breast cancers  
*Supported by Tami Eagle Bowling and Friends*

**Sichun Yang, PhD**

*Case Western University*

Drugging the undrugged for advanced ER-positive breast cancer

**Junran Zhang, MD, PhD**

*Ohio State University*

Interruption of Squalene Epoxidase and DNA Damage Response

#### **YOUNG INVESTIGATOR RESEARCH GRANTS**

**Colt Egelston, PhD**

*City of Hope*

Tumor-derived T cell receptors for engineered T cell therapy of breast cancer

**Pengda Liu, PhD**

*University of North Carolina*

Targeting the deubiquitinase OTUD6B in basal-like breast cancer

**Thomas O'Sullivan, PhD**

*University of Notre Dame*

Multifunctional microimplants for sensing and delivery of response-guided treatment in breast cancer  
*Supported by Jill and John Coyle*

**Marjan Rafat, SB, SM, PhD**

*Vanderbilt University*

Novel mammary organoids to examine radiation-induced recurrence in HER2BC

**Laura Spring, MD**

*Massachusetts General Hospital*

The Neoadjuvant Model as a Translational Tool to Improve outcomes in ER+ Breast Cancer  
*Deborah G. Black Memorial Grant*

**Enid Toska, PhD**

*Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center*

Elucidating the role of ARID1A in lineage plasticity and endocrine therapy resistance in ER+ breast cancer  
*Deborah G. Black Memorial Grant*

#### **BREAST SURGERY FELLOWSHIPS**

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center**

Angeleke Saridakis, MD

**Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

Michelle Abghari, MD

*Rodkin Family Breast Surgery Fellowship*

**Yale University**

Sarah Ponto Shubeck, MD

*Mitchell Family Breast Surgery Fellowship*

#### **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH GRANTS**

**Cancer Support Team**

**Danbury Hospital/New Milford Hospital**

**Gilda's Club Westchester**

**Greenwich Hospital**

**Griffin Hospital**

**Hartford Hospital**, "Life is Choices"

Chambers Family Foundation & Friends of the Latham Family

**Hospital of Central Connecticut**

**Middlesex Health**

**Norma F. Pfriem Breast Cancer Center**

**Norwalk Hospital**

**Open Door Family Medical Center**

**Stamford Health**

**White Plains Hospital**

## **WHAT LIFE-SAVING AND LIFE-CHANGING GRANTS WILL YOU ENABLE US TO FUND IN 2021?**

To keep an eye out for upcoming events visit:

[breastcanceralliance.org/events](https://breastcanceralliance.org/events)



**Breast Cancer Alliance**  
48 Maple Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830  
Yonni Wattenmaker, Executive Director [breastcanceralliance.org](https://breastcanceralliance.org)



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